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ABSTRACT

A survey of 65 principals in the Newark (New Jersey) school system elicited their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Newark Teacher Center, in terms of its value to the principals themselves as well as to the teachers. The principals were asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement on 22 items. The highest agreement was with the statement, "In my opinion the elimination of the Newark Teacher Center would be a loss to our district." Other items asked the principals to indicate which programs offered at the center were of value to them as instructional leaders and to identify positive changes they perceived in teachers' methods of instruction, classroom management, and other teaching skills. The majority of the principals agreed with the questionnaire items regarding the value of various types of activities to themselves. More principals in schools with a high rate of particpation in the Newark Teacher Center observed changes in teachers' methods of instruction, attitudes toward teaching, classroom management techniques, availability and use of resources, pupil achievement, and the sharing of ideas and materials than did principals in schools with a low rate of teacher participation. They felt that the Newark Teacher Center was successful in attracting less motivated teachers. Most of the differences in responses between the principals from schools with high, medium, and low participation rates were in the areas of teacher behaviors as opposed to activities of professional value to the principals. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to this report. (JD)

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NEWARK TEACHER CENTER
PRINCIPALS' SURVEY
Analysis and Report

March, 1982

Board of Education
Newark, New Jersey

Dr. Columbus Salley
Executive Superintendent

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The survey questionnaire used in this analysis was developed by a team composed of:

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2. James Lerman, Project Director, Newark Teacher Center

3. Dr. Wendy Oxman, Department of Educational Leadership, Montclair State College

4. Ronna L. Waller, Project Coordinator, Newark Teacher Center

The questionnaire was distributed in December, 1981. Dr. Wendy Oxman conducted a computerized analysis of the responses. Dr. Jann Azumi prepared this report, with assistance from James Lerman, Ronna Waller, and John Duggan.

Newark Teacher Center Principals' Survey - 1981

Synopsis

A questionnaire survey of the principals in the Newark school system revealed their strong support for the activities of the Newark Teacher Center. They indicate that they themselves have benefitted, and that there have been positive changes in teachers' classroom behavior. Ninety-three percent of these principals feel that the elimination of the Teacher Center would be a loss to the district.

Objective

The purpose of this survey was to elicit principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Newark Teacher Center - in terms of its value to the principals themselves as well as to teachers. The Teacher Center is currently in its third year of operation, supported by federal funding awarded to the Newark Board of Education. Should federal funds diminish or dry up altogether, the Board will have to decide whether or not to continue the Center's existence. The results of this survey should be of assistance in making the decision.

Procedure

A brief questionnaire was distributed to 77 principals

in the Newark school system. Sixty-five (84%) responded. Because not all principals answered all items, there is some variation in response rate - depending on the particular question.

The questionnaires were divided into three groups: those from principals of schools with high teacher participation in Teacher Center activities, those from medium participation schools, and those from low participation schools. This classification was determined by an analysis of attendance records of teachers' participation in Center-sponsored activities. The number of teachers in each school and the frequency of attendance were both used to classify the schools.

There were a total of 22 items on the questionnaire. The principal indicated his/her degree of agreement with each item by circling one of four possible choices: SA, A, D, SD, (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The items were designed to cover various programs offered by the Teacher Center, as well as various effects these programs might have on teachers.

Results

A. All Principals

There was overwhelming agreement among the principals on all of the 22 items. The highest agreement (93%

of the principals) was with the statement, "In my opinion, the elimination of the Newark Teacher Center would be a loss to our district." In fact, 61% of the principals strongly agreed with this item. The lowest percentage of agreement (72% of the principals) was with the statement "The Newark Teacher Center has been successful in attracting somewhat less motivated teachers to participate in its programs as well as the highly motivated." The questionnaire contains two sets of items. One set had to do with the various programs at the Newark Teacher Center. The principal was to indicate which programs were of value to him/her as an instructional leader. The second set of items had to do with changes the principal has perceived in teachers with regard to their methods of instruction, classroom management, etc. Generally, there was more agreement with items in the second set than with those in the first. More principals agree that the Teacher Center is of benefit to teachers than agree that it is of value to themselves.* However, there are two exceptions to this generality. There was very high agreement (92%) with the general statement, "The Newark Teacher Center has been of value to me in my role as instructional leader." Further, 91% of the principals agreed that the newsletter was of value to them.

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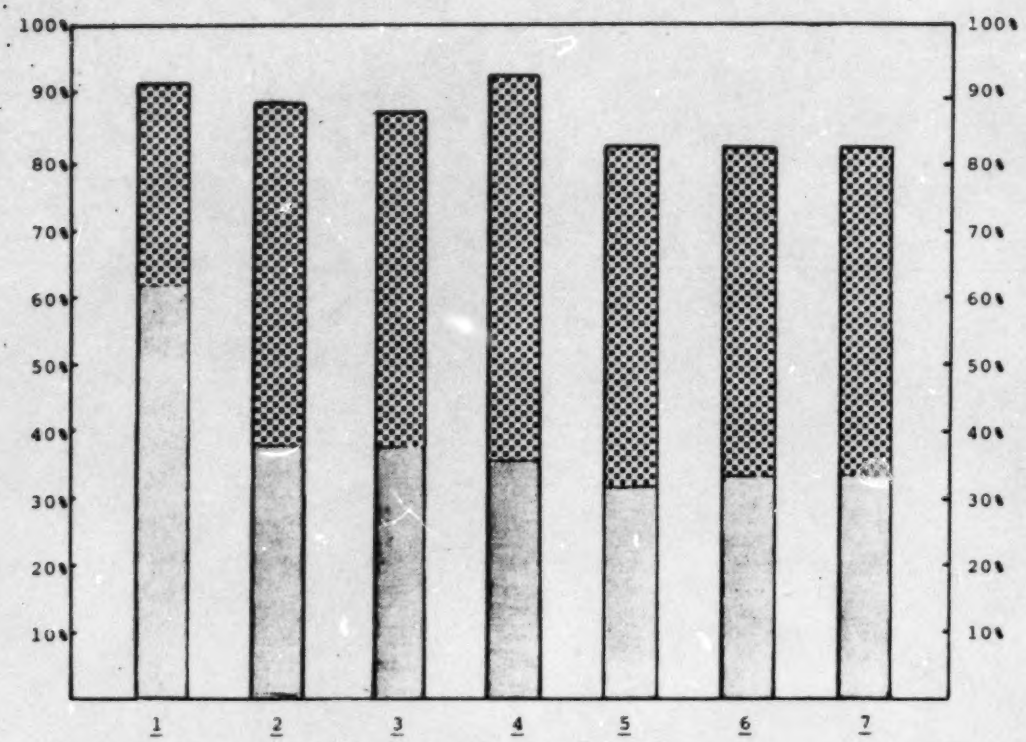
*The response rate was also less for several of the items in the first set.

There were some items with which principals more strongly agreed than others, (See Figure 1). By far, the highest strongly agree percentage was with the item stating that eliminating the Center would be a loss to the district (61%).

Other high strongly agree percentages are with three elements of the Center considered of value to the principal: workshops (38%), resource center (39%), and newsletter (36%). Thirty-two percent of the principals strongly agreed that there were positive changes in teachers in their schools as a result of Teacher Center participation; 32% strongly agreed that there were changes in the area of "availability of resources", and 31% strongly agreed that there were positive changes regarding the "sharing of ideas and materials among teachers."

FIGURE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS WITH
HIGH PERCENTAGES OF STRONG AGREEMENT



1. In my opinion, the elimination of the Newark Teacher Center would be a loss to our district.

2. Workshops at the Teacher Center have been of value to me in my role as educational leader.

3. The Resource Center at the Teacher Center has been of value to me in my role as educational leader.

4. The Newsletter of the Teacher Center has been of value to me in my role as educational leader.

5. I have observed positive changes in teachers as a result of Newark Teacher Center participation overall in the district.

6. I have observed positive changes in the availability of resources as a result of Teacher Center participation.

7. I have observed positive changes in the sharing of ideas and materials among teachers as a result of Teacher Center participation.

% Strongly Agree

% Total Agreement

B. Differences Between High, Medium and Low participation Schools

There were 14 principals from high participation schools, 27 from medium participation schools, and 22 from low participation schools. Those from high participation schools were generally more positive regarding the Teacher Center than were others. There was 100% agreement among this group on the general item regarding the value of the Center to the principal as an educational leader. There was also 100% agreement on all items having to do with the positive changes in teachers as a result of Center participation.

Each questionnaire item was tested as to the statistical significance of the differences in responses among the three groups. Although generally, the high participation group was more positive and the low participation group the least positive, not all of the differences between the groups were statistically significant. Below are the items which were significant:

1) The Center is of value to the principal as an instructional leader.
2) The Newsletter is of value to the principal.
3) Principals' observation of positive changes in teachers district-wide as a result of Teacher Center participation.

4) Principals' observation of positive changes in the areas of: methods of instruction, attitudes towards teaching, classroom management techniques, availability of resources, use of resources, pupil achievement, the sharing of ideas and materials among teachers.

5) The Center's success in attracting less motivated teachers.

6) Principals' observation of positive "spill-over" effect from participating to non-participating teachers.

As noted, most of the differences in response between the principals from high, medium, and low participating schools are in the areas of teacher behaviors as opposed to activities of value to the principals. On all of the items listed above, principals from high participating schools had more positive responses than principals from medium or low participating schools. This, surely, attests to the worthwhileness of the Teacher Center programs.

Summary

The principals' survey revealed a high regard for the activities and effects of the Newark Teacher Center. Fully 93% of them feel that the elimination of the Teacher Center

would be a loss to the district. The majority of the principals (at least 72% in all cases) agreed with the questionnaire items eliciting their perceptions regarding the value of various Teacher Center activities to themselves, as well as the changes they've observed in teachers' classroom behavior.

Generally, more principals agreed with the items having to do with changes in teacher behavior than with those concerning the value of specific Teacher Center programs to themselves as educational leaders.

Principals in schools of high teacher participation in Teacher Center activities are more positively oriented toward the Teacher Center. The significant differences between the principals of high, medium, and low participation schools are in the areas of teacher performance. More principals in the high participation schools (than in the medium or low participation schools) agree that there are positive changes in such areas as: methods of instruction, attitudes toward teaching, classroom management techniques, the sharing of ideas and materials among teachers, pupil achievement, and the availability and use of resources. From the principals' point of view, then, the Newark Teacher Center has had a very positive influence in the district, and this statement is especially true of those principals whose teachers have actually had greater participation in Teacher Center activities.

NEWARK TEACHER CENTER PRINCIPAL'S SURVEY - 1981

The Newark Teacher Center operates with federal funding awarded to the Newark Board of Education. This school year is the third year of operation for the Teacher Center. We are interested in learning your perception of the effectiveness of the Teacher Center's overall programs.

Please indicate your opinion regarding the following statements by circling the appropriate item.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

						N	% AGREE
1.	The Newark Teacher Center has been of value to me in my role as instructional leader.....	1.	SA	A	D	SD	53	92
	The following elements of the Newark Teacher Center program have been of value to me in my role as educational leader:							
2.	Workshops.....	2.	SA	A	D	SD	58	88
3.	Graduate Courses.....	3.	SA	A	D	SD	47	78.5
4.	Curriculum Study Task Forces.....	4.	SA	A	D	SD	44	72.5
5.	Stress/Morale Program.....	5.	SA	A	D	SD	50	74
6.	In-School Advisement.....	6.	SA	A	D	SD	49	81
7.	Resource Center.....	7.	SA	A	D	SD	59	86.5
8.	Newsletter.....	8.	SA	A	D	SD	56	91
9.	I have observed positive changes in teachers as a result of Newark Teacher Center participation, overall in the district.....	9.	SA	A	D	SD	56	84
10.	I have observed positive changes in teachers as a result of Newark Teacher Center participation, in my school.....	10.	SA	A	D	SD	60	89
	I have observed positive changes in the following areas as a result of Newark Teacher Center participation.							
11.	Attitudes toward teaching.....	11.	SA	A	D	SD	56	84
12.	Methods of instruction.....	12.	SA	A	D	SD	58	87.5
13.	Classroom management techniques.....	13.	SA	A	D	SD	53	85
14.	Curriculum development.....	14.	SA	A	D	SD	49	81
15.	Availability of resources.....	15.	SA	A	D	SD	56	89
16.	Use of resources.....	16.	SA	A	D	SD	51	90
17.	Pupil achievement.....	17.	SA	A	D	SD	47	81
18.	Sharing of ideas and materials among teachers.....	18.	SA	A	D	SD	58	88
19.	Teacher morale.....	19.	SA	A	D	SD	53	85
	Typically, new staff development programs tend to attract highly motivated teachers.							
20.	The Newark Teacher Center has been successful in attracting somewhat less motivated teachers to participate in its programs as well as the highly motivated.....	20.	SA	A	D	SD	58	72
21	I have seen a positive "spillover" effect from Newark Teacher Center participating teachers to non-participants.....	21.	SA	A	D	SD	59	78
	Newark teachers have indicated that they benefit from the central location, full-time staff, low cost, and centralized services of the NTC.							
22	In my opinion, the elimination of the Newark Teacher Center would be a loss to our district.....	22.	SA	A	D	SD	59	93
23.	There are _____ full-time teachers currently employed in my school.							
24.	My name is _____							
25.	Please comment on your overall perception of the value of the Newark Teacher Center. (Please use reverse side.)							